

## Message Text

PAGE 01 REYKJA 00834 172024Z

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 NEA-10

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R 171830Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3802

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MARR IC NATO

SUBJECT: IDF ISSUE: INTERVIEW WITH PRIME MINISTER

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. DURING NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW PRIMMIN JOHANNESSON EMPHASIZED THAT GOVERNMENT COALITION AGREEMENT DID NOT STIPULATE UNCONDITIONALLY THAT IDF WAS TO LEAVE ICELAND BEFORE END OF ELECTORAL TERM. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT NEGOTIATIONS WITH USG WOULD LEAD TO REDUCTION IN SIZE OF IDF. HE SAID THAT BRITISH FLEET INCURSION CAUSING GOI TO REVIEW ITS NATO MEMBERSHIP BUT THAT RESIGNATION PROBABLY WOULD NOT ASSIST IN SOLUTION OF FISHERIES DISPUTE. END SUMMARY.

2. INDEPENDENCE PARTY DAILY MORGUNBLADID PUBLISHED INTERVIEW WITH PRIMIN JOHANNESSON JULY 14. INFORMAL TRANSLATION IS AS FOLLOWS:  
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PAGE 02 REYKJA 00834 172024Z

Q. TURNING TO THE REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AGREEMENT, MR. P.M.  
IT IS EXPECTED THAT NATO WILL SUBMIT A REPORT ON ICELAND'S  
DEFENSE NEEDS WITHIN SIX MONTHS, OR SHORTLY BEFORE NEXT YEAR.  
DO YOU EXPECT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE US ON THE MATTER (REVIEW)

WITHIN THIS TIME PERIOD?

A. I EXPECT SUCH NEGOTIATIONS SOON. THE FOREIGN MINISTER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE TALKS, NOT I. HOWEVER, I HAVE ALWAYS LOOKED UPON THE ISSUE AS ONE BETWEEN THE US AND ICELAND.

Q. MR. P.M. IS IT THE POLICY OF THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY THAT THE DEFENSE AGREEMENT SHOULD BE TERMINATED AT THE END OF THE SIX-MONTH PERIOD, I.E. THAT THE DEFENSE FORCE SHOULD HAVE LEFT ICELAND BY THE END OF 1974?

A. IT IS THE POLICY OF THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY TO REVIEW THE DEFENSE AGREEMENT WITH THE GOAL THAT THE DEFENSE FORCE SHOULD LEAVE ICELAND IN STAGES -- THAT THE PRESENCE OF THE DEFENSE FORCE SHOULD NOT BE PERMANENT. THERE IS NO STIPULATION WHICH STATES THAT THE REVIEW SHOULD BE ENDED WITHIN SIX MONTHS, THIS DEPENDS ON THE PROGRESS MADE, WHETHER AN AGREEMENT SEEMS LIKELY. THERE ARE MANY CONSIDERATIONS SUCH AS THE POSSIBILITY FOR A DETENTE IN EUROPE. IF WE CONTINUE TO STAY IN NATO, WHICH WILL BE THE CASE, GRANTED NO CHANGE IN THE COALITION AGREEMENT, WE MUST HONOR OUR COMMITMENT TO MAINTAIN STATIONS IN ICELAND AND HERE IT IS POSSIBLE THAT ICELANDERS MAY TAKE OVER SOME OF THE JOBS INVOLVED. HOWEVER, THIS CANNOT BE PINNED DOWN BEFORE MATTERS HAVE BEEN CLARIFIED.

Q. IS IT PERHAPS POSSIBLE THAT THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY MAY BE LOOKING FOR A REVIEW IN THE FORM OF SOME REDUCTION IN THE US FORCE AND AN INCREASE IN ICELANDIC INPUT INTO THE OPERATIONS OF SURVEILLANCE STATIONS -- I.E. THAT A NEW DEFENSE AGREEMENT WILL BE SIGNED WITH THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF A REDUCED US FORCE?

A. THIS MAY POSSIBLY HAPPEN -- FOR A WHILE -- BUT THE REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AGREEMENT WILL BE CONDUCTED WITH THE AIM OF TERMINATING THE PRESENT SITUATION AND THIS MAY TAKE TIME.

Q. ACCORDING TO ARTICLE 7, THE REVIEW SHOULD END AT THE BEGINNING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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PAGE 03 REYKJA 00834 172024Z

OF NEXT YEAR. ARE YOU NOT CONCERNED THAT THE PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE WILL DEMAND THAT THE DEFENSE AGREEMENT BE TERMINATED AT THAT TIME OR ELSE TERMINATE THE COALITION AGREEMENT?

A. THE COALITION AGREEMENT DOES NOT STIPULATE (EMPHASIS) THAT THE DEFENSE FORCE SHOULD UNCONDITIONALLY DEPART BEFORE THE END OF OUR TERM. I DO NOT DOUBT THE SINCERITY OF THE PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE IN THE MATTER NOR THAT THEY WILL PRESS THE ISSUE. I EXPECT THEM TO EVALUATE THE POSITION ACCORDING TO THE PROGRESS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. I HOPE THAT THERE WILL NOT BE A SPLIT ON THE ISSUE AND THAT WE CAN FIND A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION. I THINK THAT THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF ICELANDERS IS NOT TO MAINTAIN A FOREIGN FORCE IN ICELAND FOR LONG.

Q. IN DISCUSSIONS ON THE INVASION OF THE BRITISH FLEET IT HAS BEEN STRONGLY VOICED THAT WE SHOULD LEAVE NATO FOR THIS REASON. DO YOU FEEL THAT THOSE TWO ISSUES SHOULD BE RELATED, THAT WE SHOULD LEAVE NATO BECAUSE THE BRITISH HAVE USED FORCE AGAINST US?

A. OF COURSE IT CAN HAPPEN THAT ICELAND HAS TO REVIEW ITS POSITION TOWARD NATO BUT WE HAVE NOT WANTED TO INTERRELATE THE FISHING LIMIT ISSUE AND THE DEFENSE ISSUE, NOR THE FISHING LIMIT ISSUE AND OUR MEMBERSHIP IN NATO. AS I HAVE STATED EARLIER, THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO ARE DISSATISFIED WITH NATO'S ROLE IN THE DISPUTE, AND SO AM I. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT SHOULD WE RESIGN FROM NATO IT WOULD NOT BE OF ANY ADVANTAGE TO US IN THE DISPUTE.

Q. SINCE YOU ARE OF THE OPINION THAT OUR RESIGNATION FROM NATO WOULD NOT HELP US ANY IN THE FISHERIES DISPUTE, CAN I PRESUME THAT WE WILL NOT RESIGN FROM NATO FOR THAT REASON?

A. THE PRESENT SITUATION CAN AFFECT ONE'S POSITION ON NATO. THE ROLE OF NATO IS AFTER ALL PEACE-KEEPING. ONE CAN FEEL THAT NATO HAS NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN THIS ROLE SINCE IT HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO PREVENT AN ALLY FROM USING MILITARY FORCE AGAINST US.

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A CLEAR STATEMENT FROM YOU, MR. P.M.  
--SINCE YOU ARE CONVINCED THAT RESIGNATION FROM NATO WILL NOT HELP US ANY IN THE FISHERIES DISPUTE, YOU ARE THEN PRESUMABLY OF THE OPINION THAT WE SHOULD NOT RESIGN FROM NATO BECAUSE OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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PAGE 04 REYKJA 00834 172024Z

INVASION?

A. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT WE MAY REVIEW OUR POSITION ON NATO, AMONG OTHER THINGS, IN THE LIGHT OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS, DESPITE THE FACT THAT I DO NOT THINK THAT THIS WILL HELP US TO GET RID OF THE BRITISH FLEET. END UNCLASSIFIED

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3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH NOT AN ENDORSEMENT OF THE IDF, THE PRIMIN'S REMARKS NEVERTHELESS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A GOOD SIGN FOR US. THIS MAY BE ONE OF THE THINGS THE FONMIN WAS REFERRING TO WHEN HE TOLD ME LAST WEEK THAT WE WOULD SEE SIGNS OF HIS ATTEMPTS TO HAVE THE IDF ISSUE STUDIED ON ITS OWN MERITS. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN THE PAST TWO MONTHS THE PRIMIN HAS MADE A STATEMENT PUBLICLY WHICH TAKES A MORE FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BASE. THE REMARKS ARE SIGNIFICANT ALSO IN THAT THEY CONTRADICT THE RECENT STATEMENT BY PEOPLES' ALLIANCE MINISTER MAGNUS KJARTANSSON WHEN HE CLAIMED THE COALITION GOVERNMENT PLATFORM PERMITS NO COMPROMISE ON THE QUESTION OF IDF LEAVING ICELAND. THE PRIMIN HAS RARELY CONTRADICTED ANOTHER MINISTER IN PUBLIC.

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